SECONDARY EDUCATION IN ALBERTA

Alberta

GOVERNMENT OF ALBERTA

JUNE
1985

SECONDARY EDUCATION IN ALBERTA

POLICY STATEMENT

JUNE
1985

LEGISLATIVE ASSEMBLY

ALBERTA

To the people of Alberta

The Government of Alberta shares with the people of the province an enthusiasm about the future. Our commitment is to encourage the continued development of a community that respects and cherishes individuality and individual initiative. We want to encourage competence, self-confidence, a sense of responsibility, and a determination to contribute to the prosperity and the well-being of the community. We want to encourage a sense of belonging to the Alberta family. One way to meet this commitment is through a well-supported and well-designed education system which brings out the best in our children, for their benefit and for the benefit of our community.

Alberta has one of the finest education systems in North America. Unlike many other re-examinations of education, ours has not led to the conclusion that we are "in crisis". But a good education system can always be made better. We cannot afford to settle for anything less than our best. We can, and we must strive to do better.

This policy sets the direction for improving secondary education. It has taken into account what we know about adolescents and their needs. It has recognized that change is occurring at a rapid rate and may have profound technological, economic and social implications. Finally, it has carefully considered the opinions of Albertans.

On behalf of the Government of Alberta, we express our deep appreciation to those who contributed to our evaluation and review of the secondary education program. Their contributions were invaluable in describing directions and recommending priorities for a new secondary program.

The direction, the goals, and the priorities for the future are clear. The challenge now lies with each of us — with students, teachers, administrators, trustees, parents and other members of the community. As a provincial government we recognize and are committed to fulfilling our leadership role. Together we must get on with the job.

David King,
Minister of Education

Peter Lougheed,
Premier

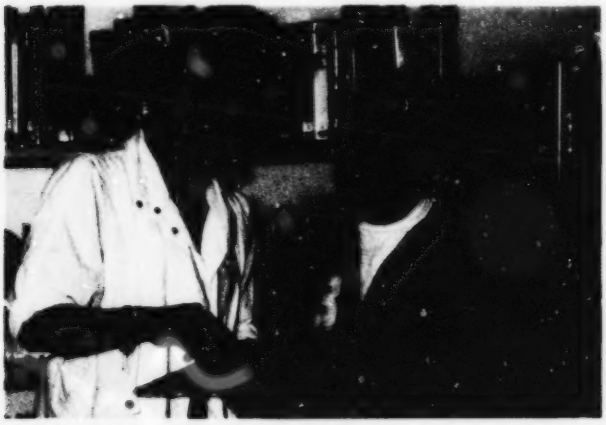
Introduction

PART

1

Introduction

The education of children is vital to society and its future. We must examine continually the purpose and the direction of our education system: what we teach our youth; the skills, knowledge and positive attitudes we expect Alberta youth to acquire; and the kinds of graduates we want. We need to balance what young people, parents and adults need, want, and expect, and what Alberta society as a whole needs, wants, and expects, from our school system, now and in the future. This task is essential to ensure that our schools are excellent, relevant, and highly regarded in our community.



Education is a high priority for the Government of Alberta. This policy statement reflects that priority by setting a new, more challenging direction for our secondary school program — a new direction which will provide the basis for an education system committed to excellence. We believe a commitment to excellence in our schools will encourage excellence in students and in all others involved with education.

This policy statement is the result of a thorough review of our secondary programs. When the review began in February, 1984, the Honourable David King, Minister of Education, took note of the extent to which the objectives and content of our secondary education program were being questioned. He concluded that we need to re-examine the current educational programs for our youth and determine how education can best prepare our young people to meet the challenges they will face in the future.

Premier Peter Lougheed, in his address to the Canadian Education Association in September 1984, emphasized the need to evaluate our education system periodically. He added that "... if you have a good education system, the community at large is more able to survive as an entity — to progress and to grow — providing fine opportunities for our young people."

The review proceeded in several ways. In March, 1984, a newspaper-style brochure and questionnaire were distributed to over 856,000 households in Alberta. The brochure described the current program for secondary students and asked Albertans to complete the questionnaire. Over 10,000 Albertans responded. Their participation and their views were welcomed and appreciated.

Other Albertans prepared briefs, wrote letters and phoned our offices. In May, 1984, a Gallup Poll was conducted to determine the views of the public. Finally, because students are at the centre of our education programs, we asked a representative group of students about their views on the objectives of secondary education.

The review considered the changes occurring in other provinces and countries, the history of change in our own secondary programs, and helpful information about the young people in our secondary schools. It also examined reasonable forecasts of the future for Alberta and Canada.

Mr. King sought the assistance of a group of key Albertans. He appointed an Advisory Committee, chaired by Halvar Jonson, MLA for Ponoka. Other members of the committee were Patrick J. Gorman, Harlene Mosby, Lynn Sawyer, R. Bryan Targett, C. Peter Valentine and Arnold McCallum. Mr. McCallum represented the Northwest Territories, which by agreement, uses Alberta's Secondary Program of Studies. The Advisory Committee provided their recommendations in a report entitled *Foundation for the Future*, which formed a solid basis for discussions across the province.

These activities, taken together, resulted in this policy statement. It is the position of the Government of Alberta regarding the future of secondary education in this province.

The development of a first class secondary education program is never easy. Each of us has opinions about what our schools should do. In many cases, there is a need to balance opposing views. While many suggest a return to a more traditional approach, others believe with equally strong conviction that a more innovative and more future-looking program is needed. This policy provides a balance. It recognizes that our children require a sophisticated, innovative, and challenging education. It also recognizes that a sophisticated education demands a firm foundation of basic knowledge and skills.

The central focus of the policy statement is the student. In reviewing the directions set by the paper, it is important to keep in mind four key points:

1. We are planning and developing programs for our youth. Their very diverse needs must be addressed because it is through our young people that the community will be well served.
2. The programs we plan today will begin to have their earliest impact in the late 1980's and their full impact on students who will graduate in the 1990's.
3. We must strive to graduate young people who are well educated, with a firm foundation of the basic knowledge and skills. More important, young people must be inspired and challenged to continue their learning and to use their education for constructive purposes. They must be creative and innovative. They must be prepared to take risks to achieve goals. They must be prepared to tackle the most difficult problems which our society faces and to shape the course of the future by their actions.
4. The key to an excellent education lies in the positive and rewarding interaction of students and teachers. That is the focus of all of our efforts in education. Without this kind of positive interaction the goal of an excellent education cannot be met.

The final point recognizes that the effectiveness of our programs and of the changes envisioned in this policy depends on the classroom teacher. To provide young people with an excellent education, we must have teachers who are well educated, carefully prepared for their role in the classroom, committed to their profession and the continual improvement of their practice, and dedicated to education. We have excellent teachers in Alberta and we are confident that this new policy will assist them in providing an excellent education for Alberta's youth.

The principles and the objectives described in this policy statement are consistent with, and reinforce, the thrust of the Government's White Paper: "Proposals for an Industrial and Science Strategy for Albertans 1985-1990" which states that "Education should foster ideas of risk-taking, innovation and the pursuit of excellence". This policy statement sets the direction for change to meet those objectives. The next step will be a consistent and deliberate review of the content and objectives of our curriculum to ensure that the directions set in this paper are achieved. Throughout, we must continue in a systematic way to involve the various partners in education in making the changes envisioned by this policy.

Change in our secondary schools will begin almost immediately as teachers, students, and parents recognize the significance of this policy. Government has set direction and goals by this policy statement, and by its leadership. For real change to occur, teachers, students and parents as well must recognize and accept the challenge of this policy. Our goal is to accomplish meaningful change as quickly but also as smoothly as possible. Planning, ample notice, and careful transition will be required so that students are not adversely affected by program changes. The first program changes will begin in September 1986.

Finally, this policy is part of a comprehensive approach to excellence in education. The policy focuses on the objectives and outcomes of our secondary education program. It focuses on the goals that we expect young people in secondary programs to achieve. Other major initiatives underway or planned will complement this policy. Taken together, they will result in an excellent education system.

The following sections outline the basic principles upon which the new directions are based. These principles are reflected in the goals for secondary schools, and in the statements to guide future changes in the program and organization of our secondary schools.

Guiding Principles for Secondary Education in Alberta

PART

2

Guiding Principles for Secondary Education in Alberta

In this section, principles are stated which will guide the development of a framework for improving our secondary education program. Each principle is consistent with the following statement:

The aim of education is to develop the knowledge, the skills and the positive attitudes of individuals, so that they will be self-confident, capable and committed to setting goals, making informed choices and acting in ways that will improve their own lives and the life of their community.

The key phrase is "making choices". This government believes such an objective can be achieved best by educating students to recognize and make choices. The better the education the more likely it is that students will recognize choices which are meaningful. Students must have the knowledge to recognize wise choices, the will to make good choices, and the understanding that we live with the consequences of our choices and our actions. We educate students to value participation and initiative in order that they can accept the responsibilities and the benefits of living in an open and democratic society.

The principles endorse that outlook. They are comprehensive, enduring and reflect:

- a respect for the unique nature and worth of each individual
- a commitment to the pursuit of knowledge, learning and excellence
- a commitment to meaningful participation in our democratic society
- a commitment to educating young people to assume responsibility for themselves and for the future direction of society.

(1) The Purpose of Secondary Schools

Achieving the aim of education is not the sole responsibility of schools. The responsibility for educating young people is widely shared within the community. While secondary schools must prepare students to face a broad horizon, the primary focus must be on developing the intellectual capabilities of students. There must also be a clear recognition that in some degree the creative, emotional, ethical, physical and social development of young people must be an integral part of their intellectual development in order to produce capable and confident young adults.

PRINCIPLE #1

The secondary school, in cooperation with other agencies in society, must assist each student to become a competent, confident and responsible individual. However, the secondary school must assume primary

responsibility for the intellectual development of each student and for fostering the desire for lifelong, self-directed learning.

(2) The Instructional Program

The instructional program must be deliberate, disciplined and designed to achieve the purpose stated above. It must recognize the implications of changing circumstances without becoming preoccupied with change itself. It must be based on sound educational principles. Further, it must accommodate the developmental needs of students and the differences that exist among students while preparing them to live in a highly complex and changing society.

PRINCIPLE #2

The development and implementation of the instructional program must take into account the following considerations:

- **the nature and needs of the learner**
- **the nature and needs of a changing society**
- **the nature of knowledge in each subject area**
- **the learning environment**

(3) Citizenship

Secondary schools play an important role in preparing students for meaningful participation in society. Meaningful participation requires students to recognize their rights. More important, they must be prepared to accept the responsibilities associated with those rights. The goals, objectives, and content of secondary education should take into account the history of our community, the growth of democratic society, an understanding of the nature of man, and an understanding of our changing social, political, technological, and economic environment.

PRINCIPLE #3

Secondary schools must prepare students for responsible citizenship in a society which is changing constantly. The best preparation for students to enable them to anticipate and shape the future is a broad general education with emphasis on critical and creative thinking, communication, personal development, science and technology, and an understanding of the community.

(4) Values and Ethics

Because the world is becoming more interdependent, there is a need to examine and reach mutual understanding on principles and values essential to the improvement of society. Ethical considerations cannot be ignored in secondary schools. Schools should support parents, churches, and other community agencies in fostering the development of positive values in students.

PRINCIPLE #4

Secondary schools must assist students to recognize principles and develop personal values that enhance responsible moral and ethical behaviour.

(5) Educational Partnership

Today, opportunities for learning beyond the secondary school are increasing. Secondary education must be planned to incorporate significant learning experiences that may be acquired and delivered through a variety of community and other agencies. Consistent with the purpose of secondary education and the role of schools, the community which benefits from the system of education shares a responsibility to contribute to the continuing improvement and extension of secondary education.

PRINCIPLE #5

Opportunities must be provided to involve the community in secondary education programs and to recognize and support learning experiences which take place outside of schools.

(6) The Use of Technology in Secondary Schools

Growing demands are placed on secondary schools to provide for the educational needs of all students. Access to better educational opportunities is possible by integrating advances in technology such as computer networking, electronic communications, and other new developments in distance education and individualized learning. The application of technology in the classroom to enhance learning will require a collective vision and cooperation among many community agencies involved in the delivery of secondary education programs. Finally, students must understand the concept, the potential impact and the use of technology.

PRINCIPLE #6

The secondary education system must use technology to enhance learning and to facilitate access to equitable educational opportunities for all students, regardless of ability, circumstance or location.

(7) Diverse Educational Needs of Students

It is clear that the educational needs of students are becoming increasingly broad and diverse. Our secondary schools have students with exceptional educational needs ranging from the severely multi-handicapped to the gifted and talented. There are secondary students in French language schools, Native students, students requiring assistance to learn English, and others in special conditions. Provision must be made for adapting and providing secondary education programs in order that the broad range of student needs can be addressed more equitably.

PRINCIPLE #7

Secondary education programs must recognize and must be adapted to meet the wide range of needs and abilities of students.

(8) Continuous Review

Excellence in education can be achieved by continually striving for improvement. Leadership will be provided by the Government of Alberta to ensure that, consistent with the broad direction and goals of secondary education, an environment that encourages innovation, continuous growth and commitment to excellence will be fostered.

PRINCIPLE #8

The purposes, goals, content, and delivery of secondary education must be reviewed on a regular basis to ensure that innovation and excellence are fostered, and that the changing needs of students and society are met.

Planning New Secondary Education Programs

PART

3

Planning New Secondary Education Programs

The principles outlined in the previous section provide guidance and direction for planning new programs for Alberta's secondary schools. In this section, it is important to establish clearly the goals that secondary schools should strive to achieve and the roles that junior and senior high schools should perform. This section outlines a comprehensive set of directional statements for secondary education.

1. The Goals of Secondary Education

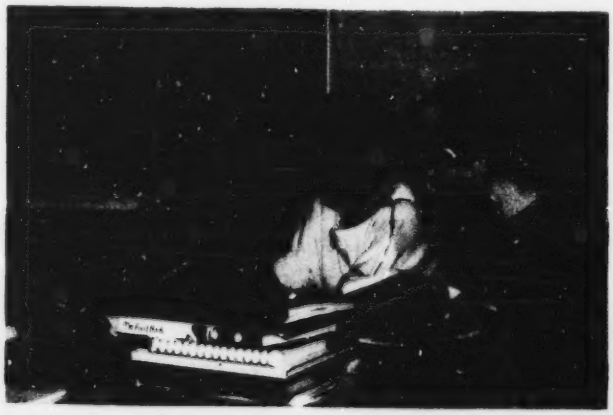
Education should help students recognize, make, and act on good choices. Within this broad aim, the goals of secondary schools are to assist students to:

- **develop the ability to think conceptually, critically and creatively, to acquire and apply problem-solving skills, to apply principles of logic, and to use different modes of inquiry;**
- **master effective language and communication skills, including the ability to use communications technology;**
- **acquire basic knowledge, skills, and positive attitudes needed to become responsible citizens and contributing members of society;**
- **learn about the interdependent nature of the world, through a study of history, geography, and political and economic systems;**
- **become aware of the expectations, and be prepared for the opportunities of the workplace — expectations that will be faced as employees or employers; expectations that will be faced as entrepreneurs or volunteers;**
- **assume increasing responsibility for independent and continuous learning, and develop positive attitudes towards learning while in school, in preparation for self-directed, lifelong educational experiences;**
- **learn about themselves and develop positive, realistic self-images;**
- **develop constructive relationships with others based on respect, trust, cooperation, consideration and caring as one aspect of moral and ethical behavior;**
- **develop cultural and recreational interests and realize personal aspirations.**

II. Role of secondary schools

The role of secondary schools must reflect the preceding goals. However, the particular way in which the goals are addressed depends on the developmental level of students. In Alberta, the secondary school system is organized into two levels: the junior high school (Grades 7, 8, and 9) and the senior high school (Grades 10, 11, and 12).

Public response and related research about the development of adolescents confirms the need to continue with two levels of secondary schools. The needs and characteristics of adolescents are different as they mature from early adolescence at ages 12-14 to middle adolescence at ages 15-17. These differences in development must be recognized in different approaches, different content, and different programs of study. Thus the roles of junior and senior high schools reflect the different developmental needs of their students. They do, however, share an overriding responsibility which is **to motivate and challenge students to do their best and to aspire to achieve excellence.**



The primary role of the junior high school is to continue and extend the work of the elementary school. In doing so, adjustments must be made to educational programs and to school organizations to reflect the wide range of levels of intellectual, emotional, ethical, physical and social maturity of junior high school students. Junior high school is a critical schooling period. Students are experiencing dramatic physical, psychological and social changes, all the while challenged to carry on with schooling.

Opportunities should be provided for students to:

- **continue development of basic knowledge, skills and positive attitudes, and to consolidate earlier learning;**
- **develop their individual interests, abilities and talents, and in the process to develop specific competencies;**
- **explore a range of learning experiences and apply new learning in different circumstances;**
- **set goals for, and make choices about, their learning and take increasing responsibility for their education and, indeed, their lives;**
- **help them mature with a positive, realistic self-image, and meet their need for affirmation and acceptance from significant adults and peers.**

The senior high school occupies a special place in our education system. First, many of the students are over the age of 16 and therefore not required to remain in school. Second, the completion of senior high school signals the end of formal schooling for most students. Finally, public attention is focused on keeping students in school and on the qualities of graduates to a degree not found at the other two levels of schooling.

Senior high school programs should provide opportunities for students to:

- **complete development of basic skills, if necessary through modified instructional activities or through alternative programs;**
- **extend and refine intellectual and other skills in preparation for entry into post-secondary education;**
- **choose courses which will lead to the fulfillment of personal aspirations;**
- **acquire specialized knowledge, skills and positive attitudes required for direct entry into the work force;**
- **become confident, competent and responsible individuals ready to assume the role of a contributing member of society.**

III. Directional Statements

The following general statements provide further direction to planning secondary education programs. They expand on the principles, goals, and roles of secondary schools stated earlier. The directional statements are outlined in six general areas: guidelines for programs, evaluation and standards, technology, community partnership, values and ethics, and program reviews.

GUIDELINES FOR PROGRAMS

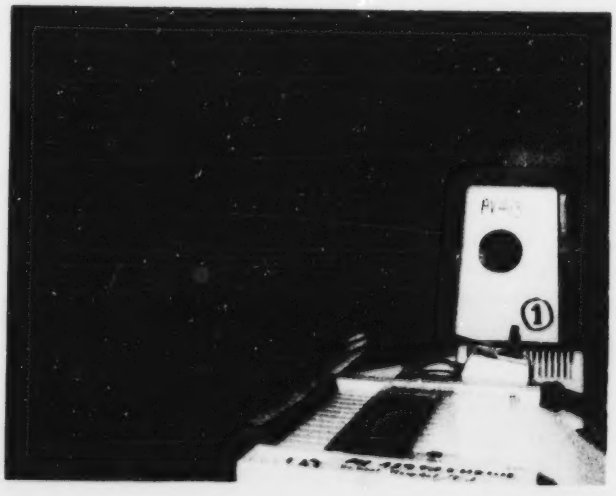
- Secondary schools should provide opportunities for all students to experience success and to acquire knowledge, skills, and positive attitudes to function effectively in society.

- The intellectual purpose of the secondary school should be emphasized by providing opportunities for all students to acquire basic communication and computation skills and to develop analytical, creative, and critical thought processes. These skills must be integrated across all subject areas. A continuum of general concepts, skills, and attitudes necessary for developing students' thinking skills will be integrated across the curriculum, from elementary education to the end of secondary education.

- Secondary programs must be designed to ensure that the developmental needs of students are addressed and that there is continuity from elementary education through junior high to senior high school education.

- The concept of a comprehensive secondary school system should be maintained. Viable alternative instructional programs should be available within the secondary school to meet the needs of exceptional students.

- Provincial policies will be developed to ensure that secondary school students with exceptional educational needs, ranging from the dependent, handicapped to the gifted and talented, will have access to programs designed to meet those needs.



- Opportunities will continue to be available for students wishing to learn in French, particularly for those who meet the requirements of the Charter of Rights and Freedoms. Appropriate modifications to the program will be made, consistent with the directions set in this policy, in implementing the program for students in French language and French immersion programs.

- Opportunities will continue to be encouraged for students to learn languages other than English or French.

- While the content and objectives of courses are set, the secondary school program and administrators should encourage teachers to use appropriate teaching strategies and materials to accommodate individual learning styles and needs. Opportunities for continuous learning, individualized instruction, and other strategies, including summer programs, should be expanded at both the junior and senior high school levels.

- School jurisdictions should select the most suitable mode and place of learning for all secondary school programs. The use of technology and community resources such as commercial, industrial, recreational and cultural facilities is encouraged. The local jurisdiction, however, is responsible for monitoring all components of the instructional program.

- Whether students are pursuing further studies or entering the work force, opportunities for vocational development should be available through the secondary school system. Vocational education programs should be maintained in areas where school populations are sufficient. In other areas, and for particular students, vocational education opportunities should be available in partnership with the community, and, to the extent possible, through the use of communications technology.

- Secondary schools should ensure that students have access to adequate information services and develop information retrieval and other related skills essential for independent and lifelong learning.

- Comprehensive guidance and counselling services should be available to secondary students primarily for developing personal, social and learning skills as well as for obtaining assistance in career awareness and preparation. School counsellors should foster a liaison between the school and the community.

- Student program decisions should be made jointly with the students, their families, and the school's professional staff. Students' educational needs and abilities should be considered and the implications of selecting alternative courses should be clarified to the students and their families.

STANDARDS AND EVALUATION

- High standards of student achievement should be encouraged and maintained. In turn, the achievement of students should be recognized.

- The Government of Alberta will maintain its primary responsibility for establishing standards for

student achievement, for developing and managing effective tools for evaluating student achievement on a provincial basis, for developing and managing diagnostic materials for use by teachers, and for providing appropriate credentials to students.

- The use of challenge examinations and the exploration of alternatives to the current Carnegie unit will be encouraged further to assist schools in meeting the diverse educational needs of students.

- The professional staff of secondary schools should establish and communicate clearly their expectations about student behavior, initiative, achievement, and responsibility to students, their families, and the community.

TECHNOLOGY

- The knowledge, skills and attitudes relevant to advances in technology and its utilization will be integrated into secondary school courses wherever appropriate. An awareness of the advantages and limitations of technological developments, their impact upon society, and the ability to use selected technologies to enhance learning and prepare students for current and future demands of society, are of such importance that all secondary school teachers will be expected to plan and incorporate this component into instructional programs.

- The application of technology will facilitate the professional practice of teachers as well as the delivery of educational and consultative services to students and teachers.

- An assessment will be required of organizations that facilitate student learning through the application of technology. The assessment will determine whether current organizations and facilities, such as ACCESS, the Alberta Correspondence School, the Alberta Vocational Centres and Athabasca University, might deliver services more effectively through an integrated and comprehensive plan. The benefits of such a plan would include:
  - The remote or small rural school, limited in teacher personnel and/or resources, could use distance education to offer a broader choice of courses.
  - Smaller groups of individual students would be able to pursue courses more economically.
  - Distance education networks might alleviate the need to close schools and the negative effect this has on communities.
  - Distance education networks could be formed to link schools to share teaching and other resources.

- Besides facilitating distance education, new technologies may support greater individualization of some learning activities.

- In addition to assisting students with routine learning needs, distance education offers the potential for catering to the particular needs of students with special abilities or interests.

COMMUNITY PARTNERSHIP

- Policies and guidelines will be developed to facilitate the effective use of educational services available outside the school.

- The secondary school system will explore ways of using accomplished members of the community such as scientists, performing artists, and community leaders more extensively in schools, in both instructional and non-instructional ways, and in support of and in association with permanent teaching staffs. For example, useful approaches might include school-community exchange, creative use of staff leave provisions, and other "partnership" ventures.

- Expanded practical experience programs planned, administered and evaluated in consultation with the academic, cultural, recreational, social services, business, industrial and labor-related communities will be required to provide some students with the knowledge and the practical experiences they need for occupational awareness and preparation.

- The secondary school system should develop direct and effective linkages with public and private agencies in the community, particularly those which provide services to Alberta youth, to ensure coordinated and complementary assistance to students.

- The responsibility for students' secondary programs will evolve towards a partnership among students, parents, the school, and the community. Students,

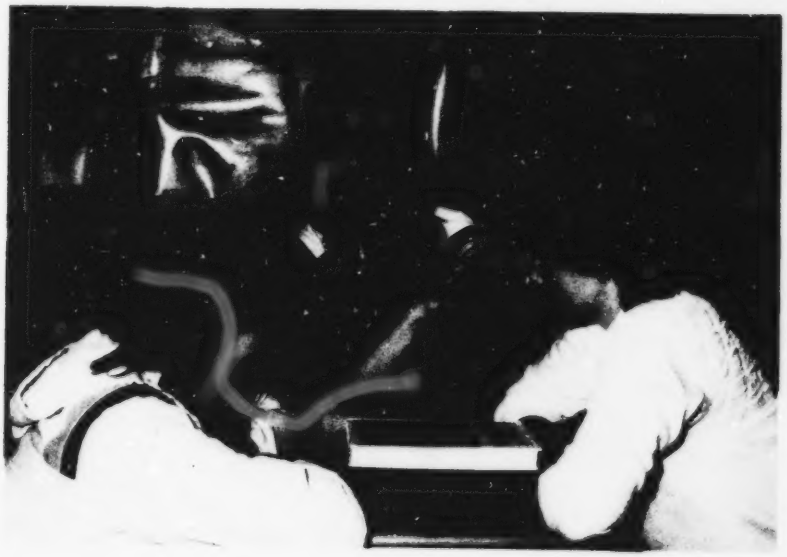
parents and teachers will be responsible for planning each student's program.

ETHICS AND VALUES

- Secondary schools should encourage standards and examples of behavior which are compatible with the expectations of the community, with the diverse nature of this province and country, and with ideas generally shared in Canadian society. Within the secondary school context, the development of desirable personal characteristics such as integrity, honesty, fairness, generosity, self-esteem, respect for others, responsibility for one's actions, a sense of justice, tolerance, open-mindedness, respect for the environment, sharing, stewardship, and cooperation should be fostered.
- In all secondary schools, including those where religious studies are part of the instructional program, the values encouraged will be those which contribute to the well being of society.
- The professional staff of secondary schools should serve as models for their students by demonstrating respect for the individual, enthusiasm for subject matter, concern for their students' development, and dedication to excellence.

PROGRAM REVIEWS

- The Government of Alberta will provide the leadership necessary to ensure educational improvements by fostering innovation and experimentation at the local level.
- Program reviews should involve the study and application of new developments, knowledge, and methods of delivery.
- The Government of Alberta will participate with the other partners in education to support related educational research designed to encourage excellence in all aspects of secondary education.



Framework for Secondary Education Programs

PART

4

Framework for Secondary Education Programs

How can the numerous principles, goals, and directional statements out lined in the previous section be translated into a comprehensive program of studies for secondary school students? What are the implications for the programs and courses that students will be expected to take during their junior and senior high school years?

To begin, the content and objectives of the secondary program of studies must be designed to:

- meet the goals of secondary education
- ensure that all students acquire basic knowledge, skills and positive attitudes through a broad base of general education
- ensure that all students are challenged to reach their full potential

Alberta's secondary program of studies must provide a strong **CORE** of courses which all students will be expected to take and a challenging set of **COMPLEMENTARY** courses. Core courses will provide students with the skills, knowledge, and attitudes which they must have in order to function effectively in society. Complementary courses provide opportunities for developing and cultivating the unique talents, interests, and abilities of students.

Similarly, within each course, whether it is core or complementary, the major part of the content must be **required** for all students who take the course. The **required** content of the course contains the knowledge, skills and attitudes that all students should be expected to acquire. However, courses will have an additional **elective** component. The elective component of courses will be consistent with the content and objectives of its required component. The purpose of the elective component will be to provide enrichment, additional assistance to those students having difficulty with the required material, or opportunities for innovation and experimentation within individual schools.

Taken together, the combination of core and complementary courses with required and elective components, is designed to meet two objectives:

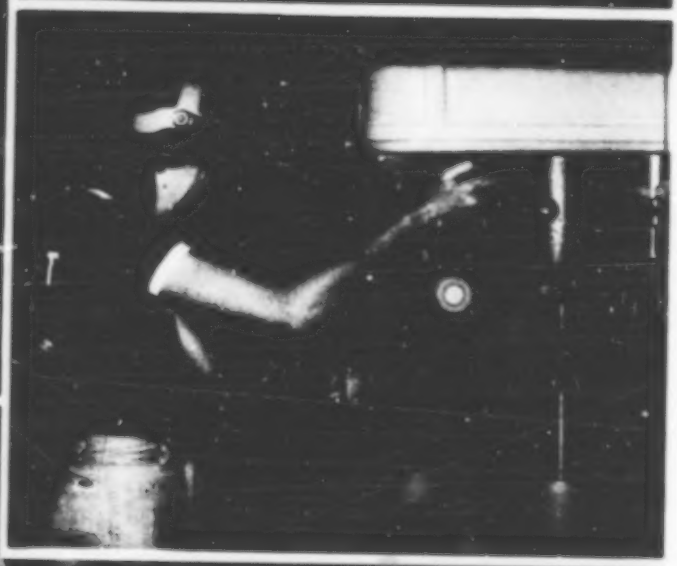
- to provide all students with a core of skills, knowledge and positive attitudes
- to provide opportunities to adapt and complement the core of the program to meet the diverse needs, capabilities and aspirations of individual students.

Generally, the balance of core to complementary courses should reflect the age and development of students. At the junior high school level, the core subjects would form the majority of a student's program and students will be expected to continue learning basic subject matter which builds upon the elementary program. Beginning in Grade 7, students should begin to select complementary courses. The amount of choice should increase in the senior high school as students begin to have a better understanding of their personal goals and aspirations.

Within this broad framework, the general requirements for the junior and senior high school programs will be as follows:

JUNIOR HIGH SCHOOL PROGRAM

- The core subjects to be taught include:
  - language arts, including reading, writing, listening, speaking and viewing, and an introduction to and appreciation for literature;
  - social studies, based on an understanding of history, geography, economics, and other social sciences as they affect the Canadian community, and addressing the concept of a multi-cultural Canadian context, an interdependent world, and related citizenship skills;
  - general mathematics, emphasizing computational skills, problem-solving skills, and practical applications;
  - general science, emphasizing problem-solving, basic scientific concepts and principles related to the student's experience, the role of science in society, with consideration given to technology, the application of science, the social, technologi-



cal, and environmental impact of science, and the moral and ethical issues which accompany the use of scientific knowledge;
- physical education, emphasizing personal fitness for daily living and effective and enthusiastic use of leisure time for recreational purposes;
- health and personal life skills, including life careers, self- development and enhancement, and personal decision-making skills affecting health.

- The **COMPLEMENTARY** component of the Junior High School Program of Studies should be made up of courses in the following areas:
  - practical and technical arts, emphasizing career preparation and self-development;
  - fine and performing arts, including aesthetic appreciation and development of creative abilities;
  - languages other than English, with stress on competency in the language and communication skills;
  - religious or ethical studies, teaching about the values of the community.

- The **CORE** and **COMPLEMENTARY** components of the junior high school program should be designed to meet the differing needs and abilities of students. School systems should assume this responsibility for providing enrichment or remediation through the elective portions of both types of courses.

- Annual time allocations for the **CORE** and **COMPLEMENTARY** courses *will* be:

CORE Courses	**COMPLEMENTARY** Courses
– a minimum of 65% to a maximum of 75% of the total instruction time	– a minimum of 25% to a maximum of 35% of the total instruction time.

Schools are encouraged to vary these times, within the limits, at each grade level to provide instructional programs to meet the varying needs of students.

- In each year of the junior high school program, students will select a minimum of three **COMPLEMENTARY** courses. Students should be encouraged to continue in Grades 8 and 9 with one of the complementary courses selected in Grade 7.

- The current Group B options will be discontinued. Instead, teachers will be encouraged to use the elective components of both core and complementary courses to provide students with opportunities to develop their interests and abilities.

- Grade 7 will be considered a transitional year in which students are provided opportunities to consolidate their basic skills and to address any problems in language arts and computational skills. The current content of the Grade 7 program will be reviewed and modified to meet this objective.

- A new complementary course in ethical studies will be developed.

- An alternative program will be developed for students who continue to experience difficulty in learning. This program, beginning in grade 8 or 9, will be known as the Integrated Occupational Program and will be articulated with a similar program in the senior high school. Additionally, schools will be expected to provide special programs, within policy set by Alberta Education, for the small group of students who have serious handicaps and therefore are unable to meet the expectations of either the Integrated Occupational or the regular program. Such programs should continue through to the senior high school level.

- The segregation of junior high school students on the basis of achievement alone should be discouraged. Decisions about placing students into special categories, such as Integrated Occupational programs, should be based upon accurate information about the abilities and interests of students.

- Entry into the senior high school will be determined on the basis of student assessment policies developed by the local school jurisdictions. Their policies should be consistent with Alberta Education policies and provincial standards.

SENIOR HIGH SCHOOL PROGRAMS

- A General Diploma or an Advanced Diploma will be available to students leaving high school. The student's transcript will be printed on the diploma.

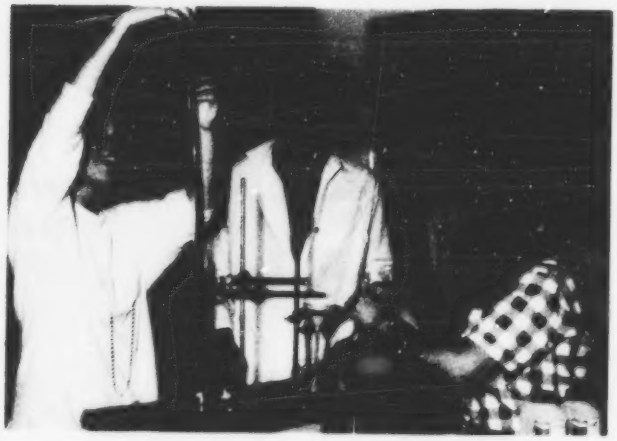
- The Certificate of Achievement will be awarded to those students who, because of their abilities and needs, have taken the Integrated Occupational program. The Certificate will recognize their achievement in that program.

- Diploma requirements will include successful completion of an instructional program consisting of both **CORE** and **COMPLEMENTARY** components. Successful completion of courses in Grades 10, 11 or 12 will require a minimum mark of 50%.

- The senior high school program will continue to be based on a broad general education including achievement of basic skills, knowledge and positive attitudes. This will require that students success fully complete core courses in the following categories:

- English, with an emphasis on oral, visual and written communication skills and an appreciation of literature;
- social studies, based on an understanding of history, economics, geography, and other social sciences, multiculturalism and Canadian content and the interrelatedness of our world;
- mathematics, including basic theoretical and applied mathematical skills;
- science, including an understanding of basic scientific concepts and their application to our world;
- physical education, emphasizing personal fitness and effective and enthusiastic use of leisure time;
- career, personal finance, and life management skills, including personal development, interpersonal relationships, effective learning skills, career planning skills and attitudes required in the workplace, preventative alcohol and drug education, and other relevant societal issues.

In addition, students should be expected to select and complete complementary courses which reflect and expand their own interests, talents and plans. A comprehensive range of complementary courses will continue to be available.



- **The General High School Diploma** will be awarded to a student holding one hundred credits in core and complementary subjects.

CORE subjects:

– English	– a minimum of 3 courses, including one at the Grade 12 level
– social studies	– a minimum of 3 courses, including one at the Grade 12 level
– mathematics	– a minimum of 2 courses
– science	– a minimum of 2 courses
– physical education	– a minimum of 1 course
– career and life management	– a minimum of 1 course
– other Grade 12 courses	– a minimum of 2 courses other than English and social studies

The total number of credits for each of the mandatory diploma requirements has not been specified pending a complete review.

- The **Advanced Diploma** reflects requirements that are more rigorous, but includes a broad base of knowledge, skills and attitudes in a variety of subject areas. Students will be expected to complete successfully the requirements of a General Diploma with a minimum of five Grade 12 level courses in the following three categories:

Category A	– English – social studies – mathematics
Category B	at least one of: – chemistry – biology – physics – general science
Category C	at least one of: – a language other than English – a fine arts course – a selected practical or technical arts course identified by Alberta Education

Diploma examinations will be required for those subjects outlined in Categories A and B. General science and all Category C courses will be three-course sequences.

- Curriculum for English, social studies, mathematics and general science will be reviewed and modified to ensure that the content level and objectives are appropriate for the different programs. In some cases, this may mean more than one level of courses in English, social studies, mathematics and general science.

CONCLUSIONS

This is the new direction for secondary education in Alberta. The impact of this new direction will be reflected almost immediately in decisions made provincially and locally. New directions and priorities will be evident quickly at the school level even though major program and curriculum revisions will not be completed until 1986-87.

This policy is a clear statement that our commitment is to students. We must provide them with the means to achieve and succeed. This policy reflects that commitment by providing:

- a firm purpose and a clear statement of goals for a program that will challenge students and encourage them to pursue excellence.
- a program which has a focus on strengthening basic skills and knowledge through a core of required subjects.
- a challenging set of courses that complement and support the core of the program.

The future of young people and the future of this province are inseparable. The challenge is exciting. We believe that this policy is a positive, constructive step towards ensuring a brighter future for all Albertans.

The Next Stage: Implementing a New Secondary Education Program

PART

5

The Next Stage: Implementing a New Secondary Education Program

A firm direction for change in secondary education has been set in the preceding sections. That is only the beginning. The challenge in the next stage will be threefold:

- to undertake a comprehensive review of our current courses and curriculum to ensure that their objectives and content are consistent with the new direction;
- to find ways of creating and reinforcing a positive learning environment in our secondary schools so that the goals of secondary education can be achieved.
- to implement improvements efficiently and effectively.

To meet the first challenge, the Government of Alberta will direct Alberta Education to coordinate a review of current curriculum. That review will begin with subject areas considered to be the highest priority. It will be similar to, but much more comprehensive than, the earlier review from a tolerance and understanding perspective. It will involve the major partners in the education system, namely, students, teachers, administrators, trustees, parents and community members. A detailed action plan for the review will be distributed by Alberta Education by the fall of 1985. The action plan will ensure that changes are well-planned, and that there is a smooth transition to the new secondary program. Program changes will begin to be implemented in September, 1986. The first priorities will be a review of the Grade 7 program and of Social Studies curriculum where the most notable change will occur on the basis of the description contained in Appendix A. The review will ensure that the curriculum reflects the objectives outlined in this policy. At the same time, work will begin in the fall of 1985 to develop an Integrated Occupational program, a general science program, and an ethical studies program.

In beginning this process for change, it is important to emphasize that while the broad direction is set, modifications in the implementation of curriculum changes will be made to take into account new information and knowledge, new methods of delivery, and new understanding gained from our experiences as we proceed with implementation of this new policy direction.

The second challenge is perhaps more difficult to meet since it involves the combined efforts and commitment of all those involved with secondary schools. But we do have some starting points. We know the key factors that are consistently present in our most effective schools. Our challenge is to find ways of ensuring all our schools exhibit the following key factors:

1. Teachers are well-prepared and highly committed both to students and to teaching. They are actively involved in educational planning within the school and in choosing the instructional means by which educational goals are achieved.

2. Strong and effective leadership is provided by the superintendent of the system and the principal of the school.

3. There is active involvement and support by the community in school decisions and programs.

4. There is a school climate which is conducive to learning and in which there are clear expectations for student performance and behaviour.

5. The expected outcomes of education are clearly communicated to students, parents, and the community at large.

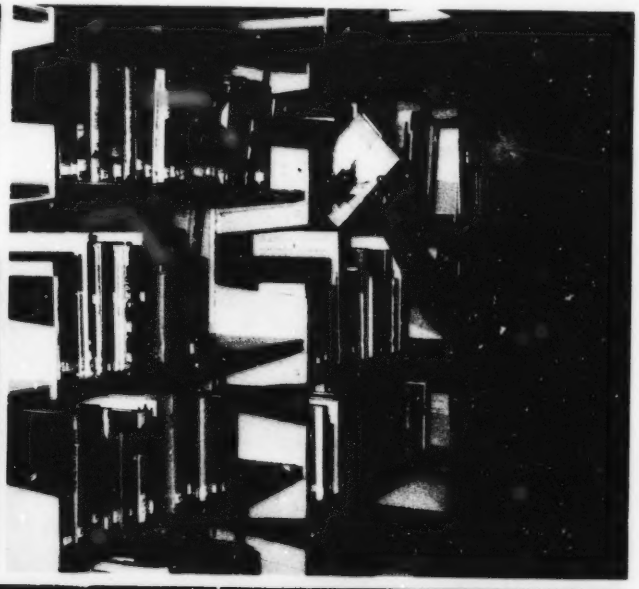
6. There is a fair system of monitoring and assessing student performance and for awarding recognition.

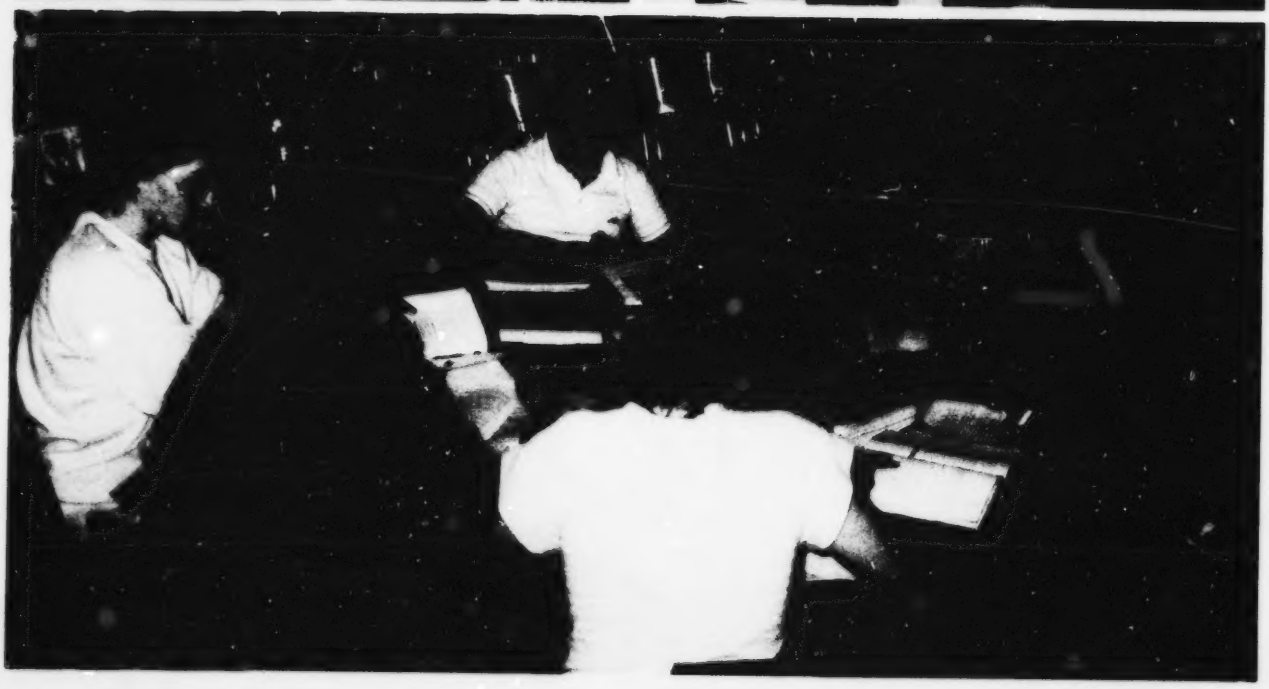
7. There are effective counselling and guidance systems to support the instructional programs.

8. The operations and services of the library resource centre are integrated fully with the instructional program.

Finally, a series of other related issues must be addressed to ensure that the new directions are implemented successfully. Recognizing the vital role of teachers, careful attention must be paid to how teachers are prepared for the challenges of the classroom as well as for the changing role that teachers will play in the future. We need to ensure that secondary education programs are designed to articulate with programs at the post-secondary level, so that students going on to post-secondary education will have a smooth transition. This will require not only careful planning of the content of secondary courses, but also an assessment of the expectations of post-secondary institutions for students graduating from our high schools.

These issues are being addressed and will be part of the overall plans for implementing the new secondary education policy. The Government of Alberta will continue to provide leadership. School jurisdictions and all schools must be committed to achieving excellence in our classrooms. That is the biggest challenge — the challenge of ensuring that all our youth have opportunities to learn, to grow, and to develop into productive, competent, confident and responsible young adults.





Appendix A

Appendix A

This policy statement has implications for many courses, of which Social Studies may be the best example.

The history of social studies in North America has been marked by continuing controversies about goals, content and methods. The 1981 Alberta Social Studies Curriculum defines social studies as "the school subject in which students learn to explore and, where possible, to resolve social isues that are of public and personal concern". In the existing curriculum the role of history and the social sciences is to provide content (the 'case study') which is used to illustrate processes of social inquiry, or the dynamics of social interaction. The ultimate goal of the 1981 Curriculum is "effective citizenship", achieved through a firm grasp of processes.

As the policy statement makes clear, the Social Studies program must change. The implication of the policy is that citizenship education will be based on an understanding of history, geography, economics, and other social sciences as they affect the Canadian community. Our multi-cultural heritage and the interdependent nature of our world, and related citizenship skills will be important aspects of this study.

Critical inquiry depends upon a firm grasp of the facts. Careful analysis depends upon understanding context and continuity.

The policy also notes that social studies will be compulsory for all students through to the end of grade twelve.

In light of these new directions for social studies, a systematic review and revision of the 1981 Alberta Social Studies Curriculum will be undertaken. The review will examine the adequacy of the Curriculum in terms of the principles and emphases identified in the policy. Attention will be given to goal statements and to the organization and content of the Curriculum. The review will also examine the high school social studies program to ensure that the content, level and objectives are appropriate to the full range of students; this may lead to a second level of social studies courses. Once these directions are clear, a review of the continuing need for the high school social sciences electives will be undertaken. The review will commence in August, 1985.